United Nations A/64/PV.93

General Assembly

Sixty-fourth session

Official Records

93rd plenary meeting
Friday, 11 June 2010, 10 a.m.
New York

President: Mr. Ali Abdussalam Treki ..... (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya)

The meeting was called to order at 10.15 a.m.

Agenda item 4

Election of the President of the General Assembly

Election of the President of the General Assembly for the sixty-fifth session

The President (*spoke in Arabic*). In accordance with rule 30 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly, I now invite members of the General Assembly to proceed to the election of the President of the General Assembly for the sixty-fifth session.

May I recall that, in accordance with paragraph 1 of the annex to General Assembly resolution 33/138, of 19 December 1978, the President of the General Assembly for the sixty-fifth session should be elected from among the Group of Western European and other States.

In that connection, I have been informed by the Chairman of the Group of Western European and other States for the month of December 2009 that the Group has endorsed His Excellency Mr. Joseph Deiss of Switzerland for the presidency of the General Assembly for the sixty-fifth session.

Taking into account the provisions of paragraph 16 of General Assembly decision 34/401, I therefore declare His Excellency Mr. Joseph Deiss of Switzerland elected by acclamation President of the General Assembly for the sixty-fifth session.

I would like to congratulate His Excellency Joseph Deiss, former President of the Swiss Confederation, on his election as the President of the sixty-fifth session of the General Assembly.

I would also like to take this opportunity to acknowledge and welcome the presence of the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Swiss Confederation, Her Excellency Ms. Micheline Calmy-Rey.

I am sure that Member States appreciate the wealth of knowledge and experience that Mr. Deiss brings to this high office, which will enable him to carry forward our collective endeavour and further advance the important work of the General Assembly. His perspective as a result of having served as Minister of Foreign Affairs and Minister of Economy of Switzerland will certainly guide and benefit the discussions related to the whole host of issues and challenges of peace and security, development and human rights, which are at the heart of our agenda.

Mr. Deiss's advocacy for, and leadership of, his country's campaign for accession to the United Nations is a strong indication of his support for multilateralism and for the Organization. I hope that will contribute to our ongoing efforts to further strengthen the United Nations and promote its purposes and principles. Together, through cooperation, harmony and understanding, we can attain the necessary respect, support and consensus of Member States to promote our common objectives.

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As we begin the transition to the next session, let me assure the President-elect of my openness and availability at all times, and of my full cooperation and assistance on behalf of Member States — and that of my Office — in laying the groundwork for the sixty-fifth session and ensuring a smooth and efficient start to it. I wish the President-elect every success.

I now invite His Excellency Mr. Joseph Deiss, who has just been elected President of the General Assembly for the sixty-fifth session, to take the floor.

Mr. Deiss (Switzerland) (*spoke in French*): The mission of the United Nations is to protect the dignity, security and well-being of all human beings.

This honour for Switzerland gives me great joy and represents a personal challenge for me. I would like to thank all members of the General Assembly, and in particular the members of the Group of Western European and other States, for the trust that they have placed both in my country and in me. I promise one and all that I will be worthy of the mandate of President of the General Assembly for its sixty-fifth session, with which the Assembly has just entrusted me.

I would also like to express my gratitude to the President of the Assembly at its sixty-fourth session, His Excellency Mr. Ali Abdussalam Treki, for his enlightened leadership of the Assembly and the generous spirit with which he has introduced me to my new position. Finally, I would like to thank His Excellency Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon for his tireless efforts on behalf of the ideals of the Organization. I assure him of my full cooperation and of my loyalty.

The United Nations was created almost two thirds of a century ago thanks to the determination of its founders to prevent the recurrence of the suffering and hatred that ravaged the world in two horribly deadly conflicts. The community of peoples that they founded is very different today from what it was at San Francisco. It is global, first of all because the representatives of its 192 Member States are far more numerous than they were then and now exemplify all the diversity of the world's States.

It is also global because it is interdependent. The progress made in information technology, which we could not even have imagined just a few decades ago, and the increasing flows of persons, goods, services and capital, create a network that underpins this interdependence. Everything is moving faster and is closer by. In that environment, new global challenges have emerged: climate change, the economic and social crisis, terrorism, international crime and extremism of all sorts have now joined war and poverty and demand urgent collective efforts. More than ever before, we must act together in order to be effective.

Therefore, despite those changes, the message that I would like to underscore is that the values that the United Nations embraced at its founding are as relevant as ever in overcoming the challenges facing humankind today. I therefore invite members to turn once again to the founding of our great Organization to breathe new life into the purposes and principles set out in Article 1 of the Charter: peace and security, friendship among nations and international cooperation. Peace, friendship and cooperation must remain the keywords of our work and of our action — words which our determination will fill with meaning.

I am sure that members understand that the terms of the Charter mean that our purpose here is not merely to defend our particular national interests. We are also called upon — and the Charter is absolutely clear about this — to be friends who work together to find constructive solutions for the dignity, security and well-being of all. It is with that in mind that I will gladly accept the leadership of the General Assembly and extend my commitment to its members.

My country, Switzerland, which the Assembly has just honoured with its trust, has a paradoxical United Nations history. It is one of the oldest and most reliable pillars of the United Nations — I am thinking especially of Geneva — while here, in New York, it is known for being one of the most recent Members. We are quite proud of being one of the oldest democracies in the world. A mountainous, poor and landlocked country when it was founded, the Helvetic Confederation has now become prosperous and is the result of the solidarity of the 26 member states and of their declared determination to accept their diversity and to live together.

In 1848, after several centuries of cooperation, our states adopted a federal Constitution that has weathered every challenge to date. Its updating some years ago has made it possible to further strengthen its fundamental principles. The preamble to our Constitution was enhanced by a phrase that I would

like to quote here: "Knowing that ... the strength of the community is measured by the well-being of the weakest of its members". I hope that will also be our motto in the course of the sixty-fifth session of the General Assembly. I assure the Assembly of the loyalty and the tireless commitment of Switzerland to further the ideals of the United Nations.

It is customary for the President-elect to announce the themes and focuses that will be his or her priorities and that will mark our work. The sixty-fifth session will open with a debate on a fundamental issue, namely, making progress towards the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals. Those Goals remind us that poverty is multifaceted and requires wide-ranging action.

The commitment of the international community is particularly important today. How can the progress made just prior to the economic and financial crisis be consolidated? How can implementation be accelerated in areas such as maternal health and infant mortality, which have been lagging behind? In addition, how can we prevent new financial and economic crises and ensure lasting economic growth whereby the most vulnerable enjoy decent living conditions and natural resources are utilized in a prudent way? Climate change, food security and the reconstruction and strengthening of fragile post-conflict States are other major issues confronting us. However, finding lasting solutions to those challenges requires governance that better reflects new global balances. It also requires a United Nations that functions more effectively and serves the interests of every individual.

Lastly, the ideals of human rights, on which the Red Cross is based, humanitarian assistance and disarmament are all values close to my country's heart that are highlighted in Geneva and that we will address during the sixty-fifth session.

I would like to conclude with some more personal reflections, while confirming my absolute commitment and great motivation. I also wish to assure the Assembly that I intend to be accessible to every member and to ensure the effectiveness of our work. In doing so, I will respect all members, whose rights are equal. I will do everything I can to make sure that Swiss sobriety guarantees that relationships are based on specifics, on a positive approach and on friendship.

The world is facing great challenges that it must overcome. But I accept my mandate with great hope and steadfast conviction. Recent decades have seen remarkable economic growth that has lifted millions of human beings out of poverty. The unparalleled solidarity shown in response to the recent natural disasters is proof of the generosity of each and every one of us. But why wait for the next earthquake or other natural disaster before acting? I am convinced that it is in this forum that we can find the energy needed to set in motion a movement of peace, altruism and friendship between peoples.

Our mission is to do our utmost as we work together for the well-being of our planet and of humanity. The whole world looks to us with hope, and we do not have the right to let the world down.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): I now give the floor to the Deputy Secretary-General, Her Excellency Ms. Asha-Rose Migiro.

The Deputy Secretary-General: I congratulate His Excellency Mr. Joseph Deiss on his election as President of the General Assembly for its sixty-fifth session. I bring with me warm greetings from Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, who, as members may know, is currently in South Africa attending the opening of the World Cup — a truly special day for Africa and for the world.

It is a pleasure to add my voice to all of those paying tribute to the leadership of the President-elect. I too look forward to his stewardship of this forum.

I also take this opportunity to pay tribute to the ongoing leadership of the current President of the General Assembly and to thank him for all his continuing hard work during the sixty-fourth session.

The President-elect will take up his responsibilities at a crucial time for the international community: a time of continued economic turmoil and uncertainty; a period in which we continue to try to mount an adequate response to climate change; an era of new and dangerous threats to international peace and security; but also a time of tremendous opportunity for common progress.

The President-elect brings great experience to the job, as a scholar, as a parliamentarian and as a Government minister. And he knows the immense value of the United Nations, having lead Switzerland's campaign for accession to the Organization. His skill and wisdom will be needed across our agenda throughout the sixty-fifth session. But, as members

know, we all face an early test: the Millennium Development Goals summit in September. That meeting is a genuine opportunity to galvanize our work. We must do our utmost to uphold the commitments we have made to the people of the world.

The Secretary-General and I wish every success to the President-elect and we stand ready to support his work in any way possible.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): I thank the Deputy Secretary-General for her statement.

I now give the floor to the representative of the Congo, who will speak on behalf of the Group of African States.

Mr. Balé (Congo) (*spoke in French*): On behalf of the Group of African States, I have the honour to convey my sincere congratulations to Mr. Joseph Deiss upon his outstanding election as President of the General Assembly at its sixty-fifth session. Not only is the choice made by all of the States Members of our Organization to entrust the presidency of the General Assembly to Mr. Joseph Deiss grounds for satisfaction, but it also holds great promise for our success in the pursuit of our joint objectives.

While as a statesman Mr. Deiss needs no introduction, I should simply like to recall his outstanding political career — in turn, member of the Swiss Federal Council, Minister for Foreign Affairs and President of the Confederation — which steadies us in our belief that we have made the right choice.

Welcoming his commitment to the ideals of our Organization and noting the major axes of its activities, I should like to assure the President-elect of the General Assembly at its sixty-fifth session of the full support and vigorous cooperation of African States throughout his tenure.

Our Organization is engaged in a process of reform in order to meet the many challenges facing the world today. The priority concerns of the African continent are many, and they are well known here. In this vein, the African Group attaches great importance to all initiatives aimed at advancing this process, from the revitalization of the work of the General Assembly and system-wide coherence to Security Council reform and the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals.

Africa, like other regions, knows that it can count on the wisdom, the in-depth knowledge of major global issues and the proven experience of Mr. Joseph Deiss and hopes that, under his stewardship, urgent and appropriate response will be found to create the conditions for a better world that is safer, more peaceful and more prosperous for all.

Today, Africa is hosting an event of global importance. The football World Cup — until now, the privilege of other regions — is taking place on African soil. I should like to take this opportunity to thank South Africa, on behalf of the African Group, for having done our continent this honour. The hurdle it has just leapt is a measure of the commitment of our States, individually and collectively, to assume our share of responsibility on the international stage, including here at this Organization.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): I now give the floor to the representative of Bhutan, who will speak on behalf of the Group of Asian States.

Mr. Wangchuck (Bhutan): It is indeed an honour for me, on behalf of the Group of Asian States, to congratulate the President-elect of the General Assembly for its sixty-fifth session, His Excellency Mr. Joseph Deiss, former President and Foreign Minister of Switzerland. It is most befitting that the person who was instrumental to his country's entry as a Member of the United Nations should assume the position of President of the General Assembly. His election by acclamation today is a clear indication of our acknowledgement of his vast professional experience and our full confidence in his ability to lead and guide the important work of the General Assembly at its next session.

The General Assembly has a challenging yet promising agenda ahead of it at its sixty-fifth session. It will commence with the convening of the high-level plenary meeting on the Millennium Development Goals, which will bring together close to 132 heads of State or Government and other high dignitaries. The attention of the world will be focused on us, as our decisions and subsequent actions will determine whether making it happen by 2015 will truly become a reality, so that millions can be lifted out of poverty. At the same time, the international community will look to the United Nations to address many of our global challenges, such as the economic and financial crisis,

the grave threats posed by climate change, and the maintenance of international peace and security.

Due to its inclusiveness and legitimacy, the United Nations is not only well placed to provide leadership in address global challenges but must continue to do so. However, in order to provide effective leadership and gain greater global legitimacy, it must also show progress with ongoing initiatives within the Organization, such as reform of the Security Council, revitalization of the General Assembly and achievement of system-wide coherence for an effective and efficient United Nations.

The Asian Group is confident that President-elect Deiss, with an impressive political and academic career spanning more than three decades, who rose to occupy the highest office in his country, has excellent credentials for successfully leading the General Assembly in addressing many of the important and complex global challenges we face. Having served as the Foreign Minister of his country and having been proactively engaged with the United Nations, he is no stranger to the Organization. We therefore have full trust and confidence in his ability to build on the significant advances of his predecessors in contributing effectively to the achievement of peace, security and prosperity in the world.

I would like to take this opportunity to assure the President-elect of the full support and cooperation of the Asian Group in discharging his important responsibilities as President, and we wish him every success during his tenure.

Allow me to also take this opportunity to express the deep appreciation and gratitude of the Asian Group to you, Mr. Treki, for your tireless efforts and deep commitment to the work of the General Assembly over the past year. Your leadership, extensive experience, dedication and wisdom have all contributed to the success of the sixty-fourth session of the General Assembly. We wish you continued good health, much happiness and every success in your future endeavours.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): I now give the floor to the representative of Azerbaijan, who will speak on behalf of the Group of Eastern European States.

Mr. Mehdiyev (Azerbaijan): It is a great pleasure to speak on behalf of the Group of Eastern European States on the occasion of the election of the President of the General Assembly for the sixty-fifth session. I would first like to congratulate His Excellency Mr. Joseph Deiss of Switzerland on his election. We feel extremely fortunate to have Mr. Deiss with us. His invaluable experience, ranging from foreign policy to economics, will be a great asset in furthering our work on current issues and generating new ideas.

At the same time, I would like to express our gratitude to you, Mr. Treki, for your tireless efforts and valuable contribution during the current session. We look forward to continuing our fruitful collaboration in the forthcoming days.

We, the members of the Group of Eastern European States, are ready to do our best to strengthen our cooperation on United Nations reform. The revitalization of the General Assembly should be conducted with the aim of enhancing its role, authority and effectiveness. The Group of Eastern European States takes as a given the need to reform the Security Council in order to make it more representative and effective. Any increase in the non-permanent membership of the Council should ensure enhanced representation of the Group of Eastern European States by allocating to it at least one additional non-permanent seat in an enlarged Council.

Our priority should be the full realization of human rights through the effective implementation of relevant mechanisms and norms for the benefit of all human beings. We believe that climate change must be addressed in a firm and consistent manner by further advancing the results of the Copenhagen process. As for the world economic crisis, it must be met with measures to mitigate its impact, taking into account the Millennium Development Goals.

In conclusion, the Group of Eastern European States would like to assure the President-elect of our wholehearted support as we look forward to successful and productive cooperation during the sixty-fifth session.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): I now give the floor to the representative of Saint Kitts and Nevis, who will speak on behalf of the Group of Latin American and Caribbean States.

Mr. Richardson (Saint Kitts and Nevis): I have the honour, on behalf of the Latin American and Caribbean Group, to extend warmest congratulations to His Excellency Mr. Joseph Deiss on being elected

President of the General Assembly for its sixty-fifth session. Mr. Deiss has dedicated his life to public service and to international affairs. He had the distinction of being Foreign Minister of Switzerland when that country joined the United Nations in 2002. In addition to foreign affairs, Mr. Deiss was also heavily involved in Switzerland's economic affairs, and served as President of the Swiss Confederation. That background shows the wealth of experience he brings with him to the General Assembly, which will be extremely useful during his tenure.

This is a pivotal year for the General Assembly. The sixty-fifth session begins with the summit on the review of the Millennium Development Goals, along with other equally important meetings, and that high level of activity will continue throughout the entire session. Having a capable individual such as Mr. Deiss at the helm will do much to carry the process forward.

The Latin American and Caribbean Group would like to express its gratitude to you, Mr. President, Mr. Ali Abdussalam Treki, for your contribution to the cause of international affairs, and we look forward to a smooth transition in the Office of the President of the General Assembly.

Mr. Deiss once stated that Switzerland was ready to commit itself to playing its role as a United Nations Member and actor in global public life. His election as President at the sixty-fifth session can be viewed as testimony to that commitment. The Latin American and Caribbean Group looks forward to working closely with the President-elect, and we assure him of our full support during his presidency.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): I now give the floor to the representative of Austria, who will speak on behalf of the Group of Western European and other States.

Mr. Mayr-Harting (Austria): On behalf of the Group of Western European and other States, I would like to extend our sincere congratulations to His Excellency Mr. Joseph Deiss of Switzerland on his election as President of the General Assembly for its sixty-fifth session. Mr. Deiss's election is a recognition of Switzerland's important contribution to the United Nations within the first decade of its membership.

The President-elect brings with him wide knowledge of global affairs and a wealth of experience in international and economic affairs, experience he has gained through his highly distinguished service to his country as President, Minister of Economy and Minister for Foreign Affairs. We are confident that he will successfully advance the work of the General Assembly during its sixty-fifth session and ably guide us through our deliberations.

I would like to assure Mr. Deiss that he can rely on the full support of the Group of Western European and other States as he carries out his responsibilities. We wish him every success in doing so.

At this juncture, allow me to express to you, Mr. President, Mr. Ali Treki, our deep appreciation for the commitment and dedication you have demonstrated during your tenure. We thank you for your personal leadership of the Assembly during this session and look forward to working with you during the remaining months of your term in office. We will assist you to the best of our ability in completing the remaining items on the agenda and ensuring a smooth transition to the new presidency.

Our group looks forward to a productive sixty-fifth session of the General Assembly under the leadership of the President-elect. Important challenges remain high on the agenda as we start the next session with the high-level plenary meeting on the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) to galvanize commitment, rally support and spur collective action in order to reach the MDGs by 2015.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): We have thus concluded our consideration of agenda item 4.

Drawing of lots for the seating protocol for the sixty-fifth regular session

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): As announced in the Journal, we will now proceed to the drawing of lots to determine the Member State that will occupy the first seat in the General Assembly Hall at the sixty-fifth session. In accordance with the established practice, the Secretary-General or, in his absence, the Deputy Secretary-General, draws the name of one Member State from a box containing the names of the States Members of the General Assembly. The delegation whose name has been drawn will occupy the first seat in the General Assembly Hall, and the other countries will follow in English alphabetical order. The same order will be observed in the Main Committees.

I now invite the Deputy Secretary-General to proceed with the drawing of lots.

Having been drawn by lot by the Deputy Secretary-General, Guinea was chosen to occupy the first seat in the General Assembly Hall at the sixty-fifth session.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): I wish to inform members that, immediately after the adjournment of this meeting, consecutive meetings of the First Committee, the Special Political and Decolonization Committee (Fourth Committee), and the Second, Third, Fifth and Sixth Committees will be held in this Hall to elect the members of their respective Bureaux.

Thereafter, the General Assembly will hold its 94th plenary meeting, to elect the 21 Vice-Presidents of the General Assembly for the sixty-fifth session.

The meeting rose at 10.55 a.m.